

## M E R C A T O R:

O R,

## Commerce Retrieved,

B E I N G

CONSIDERATIONS on the State of the *British Trade*, &c.

From Tuesday, August 25. to Thursday, August 27. 1713.

*The two last Papers a Digression from the Subject of the Scots Affair.**The Scots particularly interested in, and advantaged by the Treaty of Commerce.**A Third Letter from Scotland, which concludes that part.*

**T**HE two last Papers being a Digression, at the Importunity of the Opposers Cavils, the *MERCATOR* returns to the stating the Case of the Scots Interest in the Treaty of Commerce, and to give a Third Letter from Scotland receiv'd since the last; which, it is hoped, may fully satisfy the Scots Merchants, and People also, that their Interest is especially advanc'd by the said Treaty; that they are sure to be Gainers by the Trade; and that therefore it is wonderful any of those, who had the Honour to Represent that part of Britain, could persuade themselves to oppose a thing so apparently for their Country's Good, and which at the same time they cannot but be sensible, they very much want to Ballance the Severities of the Malt-Tax and other Taxes, which they know lies heavy upon them. The Letter is as follows.

S I R,

**O**UR Last needs no Repetition: The Remainder of the Case of Scotland, as it relates to the Trade with France, take as follows:

' Those Gentlemen say, That after the Peace at Ryf-wick, we had Herrings Imported into France as Dutch Herrings, which could not be sold for above seven Livres per Barrel, when at the same time the Dutch sold theirs at twelve and fourteen Livres; which proceeded from our not Curing our Herrings so well as the Dutch do theirs.

' I answered, That it is possible a Parcel of old spoil'd Herrings, ill Cured, and perhaps Salted with Scots Salt (tho' even then against the Law of Scotland, and which since that time is much stricter than formerly) might have been Sold for seven Livres, while at the same time another Parcel of Scots Herrings, as well as Dutch, might have yielded double that Money; but it is a gross Imposition to say, that a Barrel of Scots Herrings, loyally Cured with foreign Salt, as the Law appoints, is one Livre, yea one Shilling, of less Value than the Dutch; for the Herrings being the same, the Advantage of having them at our Door (while they

' are obliged to out-rig Busses with all things suitable for a Voyage, in order to catch them on our Coasts) must be on our side; and there is not the least Question, that whenever we have the same Encouragement for our Herrings in France, that the Dutch have, we will make as good as they: for it is observable, that while our Herrings were upon the Tariff 1664, the Merchants, who Exported them to France, took particular care of the Curing, and making them fit for that Market, and in effect they were then the Makers and Curers of them themselves; for they freighted the Vessels, and employed the Seamen and Coopers, furnished Salt, Cask, and other Materials; but so soon as the high Duties and Prohibitions took place in France, and that the Trade came to be in effect restricted to the Baltick, where there was no Encouragement for such Herrings, and when they were not so nice upon the Cure or Goodness thereof, provided they had them cheap, the Exporters gave over that Trade, and so it fell into the Hands of the poorer sort of People, who (not having Stocks to lay in Provisions of Salt or Cask, but when the Shoul or Drive of Herrings came) either spared the Salt, or mixt it with our own, which occasion'd a great Discouragement to our Herrings. But as it is certain, we can Cure Herrings as well as the Dutch, so one would have thought the Insufficiency of our Herrings would have been the last Argument the Gentleman, who pretends to wish well to his Country, would have made use of at this time-a-day, when Her Majesty has so earnestly recommended, and England appears so much disposed to encourage the Fishery.

' Those Gentlemen owning they were not prepared to make a Reply, and it being late, our Conversation broke up; but before we parted, I let them see several other Mistakes, which the Author of the Letter to the Member of Royal Burrows had been under: whereof I shall mention some Particulars.

' First, That the Premises he laid down, (viz.) That if we be able to Ballance our Import from any other Nation with our Export, and not prejudice our Mann-  
factures,





es, that such a Trade might be advantageous, not quadrate with his Conclusion against the Bill, that he beg'd the Question; for it is certain, that Export to France is vastly beyond our Import thence, and that our Salmon and Herrings alone, will pay for our Wines, Brandies, Salt, &c.

As to the Argument made use of, for proving, that the Ballance of Trade was upon the Side of France, because, says the Author of the Letter, there was no Species of the Coin of France, but three penny Pieces, ever brought into Scotland; the Argument is not at all concluding; besides that, the Fact is intirely false; for before, and at the Revolution, when we had a free Trade with France, tho' we were under the Disadvantages of the high Duties upon our Woollen Manufactures, &c. yet it is certain, there were more French Pistoles than any other Species of Gold, except Guineas; and that the French Crowns and quarter Pieces, bore a considerable Bulk in the Current Coin, a great deal of which was melted down to Advantage.

Another Objection, which the Author of that Letter makes, is, upon the Account of the Encouragement France would have in Importing their Linnen to Britain. It is certain, that Scotland used to Import yearly into France, several thousand Yards of Linnen, and it was never known in the Memory of Man, that One thousand Yards were Imported in one Year from France into Scotland; and if the Encouragement had been given to our Linnen Manufacture, by taking off the Duties upon Flax and Lintseed Imported, and upon Linnen Exported, as was intended, if the Bill had passed, considering the other Advantages Scotland has now in Importing their Linnen into England, free of Duty, and of the high Duties, which still would have continued upon the French Linnen, the Bill would have been even for the Advantage of the Linnen Manufacture in Scotland.

The Author of the Letter takes Notice of another Disadvantage we would be under, by lessening the Duties upon Brandies; and that it would hinder the Consumption of Spirits made of Sugar, Molosses, &c. but tho' Brandy is a Commodity we well Import for the Use of the better sort of People, yet there will be Encouragement enough for making Spirits of Sugar and Molosses, &c. for when Brandy paid but 10 l. per Ton Duty, before the Union, there was a sufficient Profit upon other Spirits, from the great Demand thereof, for the Use of the ordinary sort of People; and it must be much more so now, that the Duties on Brandies will be above 50 l. per Ton, tho' they were reduced according to the Treaty.

I undeceived them of the Mistake the Author of that Letter was under, in relation to our thin Serges,

which must have proceeded from his not reading the Tariffs of 1664, and 1699, as indeed he seems to have taken that and every thing else upon Trust, for there is no mention made of any British Serges, but Cloth-Serges, in the Tariff of 1699, therefore the other Scots and English Serges, of a different kind, and differently Rated in the Tariff of 1664, could not be upon that Foot; yea, by an express Clause, in the Tariff of 1699, the Duties of all particular Species of Merchandizes, which are not Rated there, are declared to be the same as in 1664. So that the Tariff of 1664, is a part of the Tariff of 1699, in that respect: However, even by that Rule, Scots Serges are to pay but 40 Sols for 25 Ells, whereas Cloth-Serges were to pay 11 Livres; but by throwing out the Bill, all those Manufactures are now intirely Prohibited.

The Author of the Letter, upon considering the Royal Burrows Memorial to the Lords Commissioners of Trade, which consisted of Eleven or Twelve Particulars, will perceive, that every Point that was Material was granted, yea, even that, which related to our Herrings, Salmon, and Cod-fish, which he objects to; for the Burrows desired, that the Subjects of Britain should not be Charged with higher Duties than the Subjects of France were, upon the same Commodities, and it was agreed to. They desired, that Newfoundland might be yielded up to Britain, and it was granted, with Allowance only to the French to dry their Fish on the North parts of it, where we never used to Fish, and even there the French can't resort, beyond the time necessary for Fishing, and during that time, they are only allowed to build Stages of Wood for drying their Fish.

The other Particulars of the Letter, (viz.) (That if France wanted our Salmon, our Coal, &c. they would have them, be the Duties high or low. That if we cannot Import our Lead so cheap as the English, which is likewise a Mistake, we must Sell none, tho' we can never use the Hundred part of it our selves.) I purposely leave those Arguments to the Author's own Reflection.

I hope you will forgive the length of my Letter, by reason of the great Importance of the Subject; for upon passing of the Bill of Commerce, the Increase of our Trade, and consequently the Riches of our Country, does depend.

If they have any thing more to object, it shall receive its Answer as it comes to hand.

Edinburgh,  
Aug. 10. 1713.

I am, &c.



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